

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 DODE-00 /061 W

----- 098996

R 241245Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5047

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 71652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PO, MZ

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT DISAPPEARANCE

REF: LISBON 6503

1. BROTHER OF EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE IS ASSISTANT TO SITE MANAGER OF COMPANY CONSTRUCTING CABORA BASSA COMPLEX. SINCE DISAPPEARANCE OF AIRCRAFT, BOTH BROTHER AND HIS WIFE HAVE REPORTED DEVELOPMENTS TO LOCAL. THEIR STATEMENTS WHICH FOLLOW HAVE BEEN CORRABORATED BY OTHERS RECENTLY IN AREA.

2. ACCORDING TO LOCAL'S BOTHER, PLANE LEFT SONGO (TETE) AIRPORT WITH PILOT, PILOT'S FIVE-MONTH PREGNANT WIFE, DIRECTOR SOARES AND ANOTHER PORTUGUESE ENGINEER ON FLIGHT TO SMALL AIRSTRIP ON NORTH BANK OF ZIMBESI RIVER BEHIND DAM, WHERE RESERVOIR IS QUITE WIDE. ON THE RETURN FLIGHT TO SONGO, AT ABOUT 1700 HOURS, THE PLANE DISAPPEARED. BECAUSE OF PRESENCE OF SMALL VILLAGE NEAR DAM WHICH IS HEAVILY EQUIPPED WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS FOR DAM DEFENSE, AND OTHER REPORTS OF LIGHT PLANES RECENTLY BEING SHOT DOWN IN MOZAMBIQUE, MANY

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THINK THAT PLANE CARRYING SOARES WAS SHOT DOWN. THIS HAS NOT

BEEN CONFIRMED.

3. FOLLOWING DISAPPEARANCE OF AIRCRAFT, SEARCHES BY LIGHT AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS WERE MADE, BUT NO WRECKAGE HAS BEEN FOUND. ONLY CLUE TO PLANE'S FATE WAS OIL SLICK WHICH APPEARED ON RESEVOIR WATER, WHICH REPORTEDLY LED SEARCHERS TO BELIEVE THAT AIRCRAFT PLUNGED INTO WATER.

4. THE PILOT IS VERY EXPERIENCED, HAS WORKED IN THE AREA FOR SOME TIME, AND KNEW IT WELL.

5. LOCAL SAID BROTHER AND SITE MANAGER HAVE GONE TO AREA NEARLY EVERY DAY SINCE DISAPPEARANCE, BUT HAVE HAD NO LUCK LOCATING AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE.

6. EMBASSY HAS HEARD SIMILAR REPORTS FROM SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESSMEN BASED IN CHIMOIO AND FRENCH EMBOFFS WHO HAVE NATIONALS AT CABORA BASSA. REPORTS INCLUDE SIGHTING OF OIL SLICK AND CORRABORATE BONAFIDES OF PILOT.

7. WIFE OF LOCAL'S BROTHER IS TO SPEND WEEKEND IN MAPUTO. EMBASSY WILL REPORT AND FURTHER DETAILS.
DE PREE

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